1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

133 on the northern side of the Bella Coola valley, east of the Necleetsconnay. Before merging their waters with North Bentinck Arm the three flow more slowly and there are extensive tide-flats (see Plate 8). Several villages formerly clustered
361 around their mouths.

(1) *Q̓āmeux:* on the west bank of the Necleetsconnay about three-quarters of a mile from the sea. Nothing is known of this long-abandoned village of which even the name is uncertain. The mountain that rises behind its site is called *Q̓āmeux*, and it is supposed that the village had the same designation. Some of the older people state that there was no town, only a temporary hunting station, at this spot.

(2) *T̓əsällumx*, "Short Feet": on the very shore of North Bentinck Arm, west and north of the mouth of the Necleetsconnay. The fiord terminates in a tolerably square end, running north and south, and this town was at the northern edge. It was built on piles and the inhabitants could step to the ground only at low tide. This is the explanation given of the peculiar name, a reference to the curtailed walking space. Long ago it was a large town, but was probably occupied only
[166] during the winter. In summer the people are believed to have moved to *Numām·ic*, "The Place of Flies," on the north side of North Bentinck Arm, about one mile from its head.

[712] *(3) *Ałqäläxł*, "The Fenced Town," so called because it was stockaded: near the south bank of the *Pe·əsl̓ə*, about a quarter of a mile from the sea, near the site of the present mission church. It was inhabited until about 1870. According to one informant this village was founded by a certain *T̓äxlexwam*, a descendant of *T̓aiakwala*, who decided to move close to the river.

(4) *T̓loqo·tł*, "Small Mound," so called from the knoll on which it was situated: above *Ałqäläxł*, and about one-half mile to the north of the present Bella Coola River. Its site is crossed by the road connecting the Indian village of Bella Coola with the white settlement of the same name.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

361 able for axes, which occurs in the valley of a small stream on
[316] the slope of the mountain.

*(23) *Nulleax*, "The Place Where There Are No Falls": an affluent from the north enters the main Bella Coola about thirty-one miles from the sea and the town was located on this creek about two hundred yards above its junction with the Bella Coola. The ruins of this moderately large town were still
[175] standing about 1870. Mackenzie reached the Bella Coola River at this place. At the time of his arrival the population was
[166] larger than usual, because the salmon-weir had withstood
[226] some heavy freshets which had destroyed several weirs on the Bella Coola, and driven the inhabitants of other villages to *Nulleax*.

[133] It is said that the affluent at *Nulleax*, the stream *Xaiqts*, is the only one in the whole Bella Coola valley that does not drop precipitously into a ravine leading to the main river. Its source is a spring at the end of a pocket-like valley, at the base of steep cliffs, but it does not fall down these. The town is named from this circumstance. The area around the spring is called *Nusnäxʷɴxkt*, and it is said that some families living on the Skeena sing of it as the spot where their first ancestors came to earth, although their descendants do not know where it is located.

*(24) *Stuix:* on the point between the *La'xɬx* (Atnarko) and *Sla·kl* (Whitewater) rivers which join to form the Bella Coola. This, the most populous of the upper river towns, was deserted not long ago. The meaning of the name is unknown.

(25) *Qwliutl*, "The Place of Herbage": on the north side of the Atnarko River, a few hundred yards above the forks. This small town was deserted many years ago. The name was
[137] given on account of the hill behind the village being covered with a rank growth of plants and small bushes, but no trees.

[133] (26) *Snulk·tl*, "The Place of Falls," so called from the strong rapids of the Atnarko at this point: on the north side
[173] of the river about ten miles from the forks. This large town was long ago deserted when a large rock in the midst of the

1: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

stream, on which the salmon-weir rested, was carried away.[10] 361

The following village may be included with the above: [173]

(27) *Nusxeq:* on the shore of North Bentinck Arm, to the east of the creek that flows into it at Green Bay. This long-deserted village was built so close to the ocean that high tides reached almost to the houses. According to one informant, the name was derived from that of the first chief sent down from above to that spot; while another connected it, etymologically, with *Nusx*, the name of the barren district some four and a half miles up the valley of the creek. In recent years this village site has been used only as a summer camp. [173]

The name given to the Bella Coola valley is *Nuxälk*; that given to the inhabitants of the valley, excluding those of village no. 27, is *Nuxälkmx*.[11] 101 103

Two points must be considered with regard to the above list of towns: In the first place, can it be regarded as an accurate list, or do the towns belong to the realm of mythology? In the second place, are the customs and beliefs of the inhabitants of the different towns sufficiently similar to be described without reference to local differences? 128 173 361

The first question is difficult to answer. The Bella Coola undoubtedly consider the existence of these towns to be an historical fact, but so do they regard the peopling of the earth by men created in the land above. Nevertheless, the above list appears to be substantially correct. The Bella Coola, although now collected into a single village, still remember their ancient homes. One man, for example, stated as a matter of course that he was a man of *Snulɔli*. Further inquiry elicited the information that he had been born at *Sunxt*, where his father had moved at the time of the smallpox epidemic. It later appeared that my informant's father was born at *Tcmotl*, had married there, and that it was his father who had moved [164] [166]

[10] This explanation may be only legendary.

[11] Boas, p. 49, states that *Nuxälk* is only applied to the lower villages of the valley. All the writer's information was contrary to this view. [114]

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

from *Snuɬɔli*. My informant's grandchildren regard themselves as *Snuɬɔli* boys, and their names are embodied in myths of that village, although their forbears have not lived there for five generations. There is no reason to suppose this case exceptional. Other instances were obtained of movements of people from one village to another at earlier times, and there seems no cause to doubt the general accuracy of these. Names embodied in the origin myths of different towns are used as prerogatives and have been potent factors in keeping their memory alive. Uncertainties and inaccuracies there must be in the foregoing list, but on the whole it appears to be fairly reliable, since few contradictions were received from different informants.

Accounts obtained of the same ceremonies from the descendants of people of different villages were found in most cases to be identical. There were a few differences in custom between the people of *Stuɯx* and those of the other upper valley towns on the one hand, and the inhabitants of the lower valley on the other. These will be mentioned when necessary, but on the whole the inhabitants of the Bella Coola valley can be considered as a tribal entity.

Boas (p. 48) gives a list of Bella Coola towns which agrees fairly well with the above. Among his villages are included *Pe·ɔɬɔ* (no. 4), *Nukɣɯtskwan·e* (no. 7), and *Nusälsɯm* (no. 16).[11] All the older people agreed that these are the names of streams, though settlements located on them may have been known by the same designations. Names of the five villages recorded by Boas, nos. 6, 8, 9, 19, and 24, were not known by several old men questioned on the subject.

The villages of the Bella Coola valley did not form a political unit; each was independent. A common language was spoken throughout and the inhabitants of the different towns recognized that their origins and customs were similar. This was also recognized to be the case with regard to the people living on South Bentinck Arm, and at the head of Dean Channel.

[11] Using in each case the spelling of this monograph.